



SUMMER/FALL 2001



U.S. Congressman

Lincoln Diaz-Balart

21st District, FloridaLINCOLN DIAZ-BALART
21ST DISTRICT, FLORIDACongress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515COMMITTEE ON
RULES
VICE CHAIRMAN,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
TECHNOLOGY AND
THE HOUSE
COMMITTEE ON
INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS
(SENIORITY RETAINED)

Dear Friends:

At the beginning of the 107th Congress, I placed education and tax reform on the top of my list of priorities. I am happy to report that we have made excellent progress toward achieving many of our goals. Specifically, Congress has passed comprehensive tax relief for every American federal income tax payer, and, as you read this letter we are nearing completion of the education reform package.

Finally, relief from federal taxes is on the way. President Bush's tax plan, as part of the Economic and Tax Relief Act, was passed by Congress and signed into law on June 7, 2001. This plan lowers the tax burden on families and increases fairness by, among other things, reducing tax rates, expanding the child credit and significantly reducing the marriage penalty. Every federal income tax payer in America is going to start getting money back this year.

I am also pleased to report that the House of Representatives has passed H.R. 1, the Leave No Child Behind Act, which will work to ensure that schools and local districts have the resources and flexibility needed to better educate our children. The House and Senate will continue working to find a compromise between our version of the bill and theirs, and as this work continues, I believe we should remain focused on returning power back to parents, teachers and local school boards.

As in previous Congresses, I am continuing to make local issues that affect our community a priority. South Floridians are no strangers to flooding that can ruin property, disrupt commerce and make trying to get across town difficult. I am working with my Congressional colleagues on, among other things, securing funding for the improvement of the water and wastewater infrastructure.

As a Member of the House Committee on Rules, I have worked intensely to ensure that all debate on legislation presented before the House is fair. I remain committed to ensuring that the residents of Florida's 21st district are well represented before Congress, and that all my colleagues have the opportunity to participate equally in such debate.

The purpose of this newsletter is to share with you information concerning education reform, details regarding the tax relief package, flooding and other issues. Please do not hesitate to contact my office if I may be of assistance or if there is any matter that you would like to bring to my attention. It is an honor to represent the people of the 21st district of Florida and I look forward to hearing from you.

Cordially,

Lincoln Diaz-Balart

Tax Relief

Finally, relief from federal income taxes is on the way. Each American taxpayer who pays federal income taxes will be receiving a check from the U.S. Treasury this summer or fall. Single taxpayers will receive up to \$300, single parents will get up to \$500 and married couples can expect a tax rebate check up to \$600.

For years now, many in public office have touted that they hold the answers to making our lives better. In reality, however, only the single mother in Country Walk knows that her child needs new school clothes and money for a new computer. Only the family of four in Sweetwater knows that their eldest child is preparing to attend college while their youngest child is preparing to undergo surgery. There are just too many possible variations to have a one-size-fits-all answer handed down from Washington, D.C. The answer is much simpler than some are willing to admit. The answer is to return part of what rightfully belongs to each taxpaying citizen—their money.

The current high federal income tax rates serve as barriers, keeping low-income taxpayers out of the middle class. The best way to remove these barriers and ensure that every taxpayer receives benefits from tax relief is an across-the-board cut in taxes. Recent layoffs by businesses of every size indicate that the American economy needs a boost—quickly. Our across-the-board cut in taxes may be just the answer.

The President's tax plan, which I wholeheartedly supported, lowers the tax burden on families and increases fairness by, among other things, reducing tax rates, expanding the child credit, and significantly reducing the marriage penalty.

Education

A good education is the best tool that our young people have to succeed in today's world. I have been working with my colleagues in Congress and the Bush Administration to implement necessary reforms to our education system. The House of Representatives has passed H.R. 1, the Leave No Child Behind Act. This bill will provide the instruments necessary to empower local school districts, states and teachers to help students achieve high academic standards.

H.R. 1 works to ensure that we have the same expectations of a disadvantaged child that we do of any other child. Every child, regardless of background and upbringing, deserves a chance to excel. H.R. 1 also seeks to promote increased parental involvement and informed parental decision making.

In Florida it takes six times as many people to administer a federal education dollar than a state education dollar. H.R. 1 provides states and local districts the flexibility to cut through much of this red tape in exchange for increased accountability standards. Depending on the state, local districts could have the option of charter schools, such as the newly opened Doral Academy Charter School in our district, which allows teachers and administrators to focus on educating children rather than pushing paper to satisfy the burdensome requirements of government red tape.

H.R. 1 is a common sense approach to education reform, and I strongly support its concrete and specific goal of improving educational opportunities for every child, and especially to ensure that no child is left behind.



Congressman Diaz-Balart with Secretary of Education Roderick Paige discussing education reform.

Flooding

Those of us who live in South Florida are no strangers to the seasonal floods which ruin property and disrupt commerce. South Florida sustained millions of dollars in property damage due to heavy flooding after Hurricane Irene in 1999, and the "no name" storm in October 2000.

Since the flooding last fall, I have been working with my congressional colleagues from South Florida, community leaders, the Governor, local mayors, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, South Florida Water Management, the Florida Department of Emergency Management and Miami-Dade County to develop ways to mitigate and prevent future flooding.

We are working to secure funding for the construction of water and wastewater infrastructure improvements, as well as a study to analyze the canal system to determine whether significant modifications are advisable in the interest of flood damage reduction, environmental quality and water supply.

While there is no simple solution to prevent future flooding, a combination of factors, such as rebuilding an aging infrastructure and examining the management of the canal system, are necessary steps in the right direction. I will continue to do all I can from Washington to help South Florida to find solutions to this critical problem.

Constituent Outreach Program

Since 1993 my district office has offered an outreach program to the residents of District 21. The outreach program provides an opportunity for the residents of District 21 to meet with caseworkers from my office in a location near your neighborhood to address or assist you with any matter concerning the federal government.

Below are the dates, times and locations for the outreach program.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 st Wednesday of the month: | Kendall Branch Library |
| 3:00pm-4:30pm | 9101 SW 97 Avenue
Miami, Florida |
| 2 nd Wednesday of the month: | Sweetwater City Hall |
| 3:00pm-4:30pm | 500 SW 109 Avenue
Sweetwater, Florida |
| 3 rd Wednesday of the month: | Miami Springs City Hall |
| 3:00pm-4:30pm | 201 Westward Drive
Miami Springs, Florida |
| | 3:00pm-4:30pm |



Congressman Diaz-Balart meets with an ROTC student group from Congressional District 21 to discuss military service.

United States Military Academy Nominations

One of the unique services my district office provides is the opportunity to nominate students from the district to attend college at one of the four United States Military Academies.

Any high school student who resides in the 21st Florida Congressional District may apply to be nominated to a United States Service Academy. In order to obtain a Congressional Nomination, students should contact my district office at 305-470-8555 or by e-mail through <http://www.house.gov/writerp/>. The deadline for nominations is November 7, 2001. Students will be requested to appear before a Military Academy Nominating Committee for an interview. The selection of candidates for final nomination will be based upon the recommendations made by the Nominating Committee.



Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart speaks about education to a class during a recent visit to Miami Springs Senior High School.

HOW TO CONTACT CONGRESSMAN LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

Washington, D.C.

2244 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-4211 (tel)
(202) 225-8576 (fax)

District Office

8525 N.W. 53rd Terrace, Suite 102
Miami, Florida 33166
(305) 470-8555 (tel)
(305) 470-8575 (fax)

Also, visit my website

<http://www.house.gov/diaz-balart/>